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Letter dated 26 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to present to you herewith the second report on the work of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan (ISAF), covering the period from 1 to 31 August 2002 (see annex).

You will recall that Turkey took over the command of the ISAF for its second term, covering a period of six months, with the understanding that it would hand over the command to another country at the end of this period. Since the preparations for the transfer of command for the third term require at least three months, it is important that the new lead nation be identified as soon as possible so as to enable a smooth transfer.

I should be grateful if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ümit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 26 September 2002 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Monthly report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan for the period from 1 to 31 August 2002

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ISAF continued with its contribution to the maintenance of security in Kabul and its surrounding areas in the reporting period. The overall security circumstances stabilized further, crime rates remained low and a sense of normality returned to the city. This is despite the persistence of problems related to the return of a huge number of refugees to Kabul and the inability of the Afghan authorities to pay its police and army personnel. A number of minor explosions occurred in the city, as isolated incidents without noticeable impact on daily life. ISAF continues to be well received and trusted by the local community. The ISAF has placed a major emphasis on assistance activities towards the local community, especially in the fields of health and education. The Afghan government is seeking to consolidate the authority of the central government and to extend it to the provinces, to establish a truly national army and police force and to rehabilitate the country's basic infrastructure. Without the timely materialization of the financial commitments declared in the Tokyo Conference for the reconstruction of Afghanistan, the Afghan government will not be able to tackle by itself the underlying causes of conflict in the country, such as poverty, illiteracy and regionalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) continued to make progress with the maintenance of security in Kabul in the month of August. Patrolling activity progressed as planned and security coordination with the Afghan authorities improved further. The situation in Kabul and its surrounding areas was calm and stable, while crime rates were lower than many Western cities of comparable size. The central government endeavored to project a degree of stability and gradual progress. ISAF provided assistance with the investigation into the

assassination of Vice-President Qadir and reported its conclusions to the Afghan authorities, along with recommendations for enhanced security measures. Personnel morale remains high, and living and working conditions at the ISAF headquarters have been improved. However, there is still a residual terrorist threat, as demonstrated by a series of minor explosions in the city. The country might again succumb to extremist ideologies, if the international community fails to provide the substantial political and economic support required to help Afghanistan achieve stability and strengthen its sense of national identity.

2. ISAF ACTIVITIES

a. General:

(1) As of 31 August 2002, ISAF is composed of 4761 personnel from 20 nations.

(2) ISAF operations continued as planned in the reporting period. An average of 40 security patrols a day were conducted on a 24-hour basis and, at the request of the Afghan authorities, approximately two-thirds of these patrols were conducted jointly with the Afghan police. The joint patrols provide a useful opportunity for raising police standards in security procedures and in relations with members of the public. ISAF also provides additional security during visits of foreign dignitaries to Kabul.

(3) The ISAF leadership continues to enjoy excellent working relations with the Afghan leadership, based on the full congruity between the objectives of ISAF and of the Afghan authorities. The ISAF leadership maintains close contact with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The ISAF leadership also encourages the senior Afghan officials to work in harmony and to deploy their best efforts to achieve a broad national consensus on the way forward.

(4) The Joint Coordinating Body (JCB), set up in accordance with the Military Technical Agreement, met twice during the reporting period. The agenda of

each meeting was prepared by ISAF in accordance with established practice. The Afghan side was represented in full at both meetings, which were conducted with a cooperative and result-oriented spirit, reinforcing the sense of unity of purpose among the participants and identifying concrete avenues for greater cooperation between ISAF, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Afghan authorities.

The two meetings, held on 13 and 25 August 2002, discussed the general security situation in Kabul, progress in the implementation of ISAF's specific proposals for enhanced security measures, future Afghan security structures including the establishment and training of the Afghan national army and police force and the return of refugees. Ambassador Lakhdar Brahimi, the Secretary-General's Special Representative, Marshall Fahim Khan, Vice-President and Minister of Defense, Mr. Taj Muhammed Wardak, Minister of the Interior, and Major-General Hilmi Akın Zorlu, the ISAF Commander, attended the two meetings. The United States and German representatives reported on army and police training respectively.

At the JCB meeting held on 13 August 2002, participants agreed to invite Engineer Arif Sarvari, Head of the National Directorate for Security, and Lieutenant-General Bismillah Khan, Commander of the Kabul Garrison, to become regular members of the Body. The next meeting of the JCB will be held on 14 September 2002.

(5) ISAF enjoys the trust and respect of the people of Kabul, who are aware of the nature of ISAF's responsibilities and appreciate its contribution to security and stability. The ISAF leadership places tremendous emphasis on ensuring that ISAF personnel treat the local citizens with respect and fairness at all times. The ISAF leadership remains equi-distant to all the ethnic groups, which make up the people of Afghanistan.

(6) ISAF runs a robust public information campaign on ISAF activities, government work and the presence of the international community in Kabul. In this endeavor, the ISAF makes use of public announcements, radio and television advertisements, posters and the ISAF newspaper.

b. Security in Kabul and its surrounding areas:

(1) The situation in and around Kabul was calm and peaceful in the reporting period. The series of explosions in the city did not cause any loss of life and had no impact on the flourishing commercial and social life. Tired of violence and factional politics, ordinary citizens take a greater interest in improving their standard of living than in political matters.

(2) The explosions in the city served as a reminder of the potential terrorist threat posed by the remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaida. The anniversaries of the death of Ahmet Shah Mesut, the Northern Alliance leader, on 9 September, of the terrorist attack of 11 September and of the start of the bombing campaign in Afghanistan on 7 October might offer terrorists additional incentive to resort to violence to prove that they are still effective. ISAF plans to enhance its security measures in that period. The possibility of terrorist attacks should not be ruled out unless the activities of the Taliban and Al Qaida die down.

(3) Crime statistics reveal that only five capital crimes were committed in Kabul during the month of August. In addition, nine robberies and two shootings were reported.

(4) At the request of President Karzai on behalf of the Afghan government, ISAF provided assistance with the investigation of the assassination of Mr. Hadji Abdul Qadir, Vice-President and Minister for Public Works on 6 July 2002. ISAF concluded its work and reported its findings to the Afghan government on 17 August. As no evidence was found to implicate those under arrest, ISAF proposed to the government in writing that they be released. The individuals in question were then released by the Afghan authorities, with the exception of those considered to be guilty of negligence.

(5) The shooting which took place on 7 August, between the security forces and 12 prisoners who had escaped from prison and killed three security officers, caused serious concern. As all the prisoners involved in the

shooting lost their lives, there was considerable speculation that the prisoners may have been executed after they had been captured and that their human rights may have been breached. The ISAF Commander, Major-General Hilmi Akın Zorlu, therefore wrote to President Karzai and advised him to order an investigation into the conduct of the Afghan security forces. Major-General Zorlu also conveyed a copy of his letter to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. President Karzai subsequently set up a commission of enquiry. Furthermore, the National Directorate for Security held a press conference to provide additional information on the incident in an effort to achieve transparency.

(6) Progress was made in the implementation of the comprehensive set of measures proposed by ISAF in order to improve security coordination and intelligence-sharing among the relevant Afghan security entities, especially the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of the Interior, the National Directorate for Security, the local police and the Kabul garrison. However, the Afghan authorities have not yet finalized their consultations and procedures for the establishment of the Joint Operations Centre and the preparation of a detailed security plan for Kabul. The ISAF leadership intends to pursue these initiatives.

An attempted suicide car bombing was foiled at the end of July, when a man was arrested in Kabul in a car loaded with explosives, apparently intended for a suicide attack possibly against President Karzai. Some days prior to the incident, ISAF received some sensitive intelligence pointing to an attempt of this nature and promptly shared this valuable information with the Afghan authorities. This was a typical example of the kind of security coordination and intelligence-sharing which ISAF wishes to instill among the relevant Afghan security entities.

On visits to local police stations, ISAF personnel found most of them to be under-equipped. The ISAF leadership brought the matter to the attention of the Afghan authorities and proposed that more weapons, wireless sets and cars be acquired for the use of the police force.

In order to ensure that all Ministers have adequate protection, ISAF provided close protection training for a total of 509 bodyguards so far. An additional group of 120 bodyguards are undergoing training. Furthermore, ISAF prepared a booklet on individual protection measures and distributed to all senior officials, ISAF also offered to review the security arrangements of individual Ministers and to make recommendations for enhancing them.

c. Assistance projects towards the local community:

ISAF continued to run an extensive range of assistance activities in the reporting period towards the local community under its Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) program on the basis of humanitarian considerations, respect for cultural and religious values and the principle of equi-distance to all the ethnic groups making up the people of Afghanistan. These assistance efforts focus on the field of education and public health and include the renovation of educational establishments (schools, kindergartens and orphanages), supply of teaching materials, provision of equipment and engineering expertise to help with the water supply and sanitation, provision of fire-fighting training and equipment, assistance with the water, electricity, library and reproduction facilities of the two universities in Kabul, renovation of hospital buildings and supply of medical aid and distribution of baby food. The renovation and refurbishment the Yakatoot High School and the restoration of the historical "Shahe Du Shamshera" mosque are particular examples of ISAF's CIMIC work.

ISAF continues to receive numerous requests for assistance and seeks to utilize its limited resources to the full in order to realize a number of quick-impact projects. To date, 88 projects have been completed by ISAF, 64 current projects are underway and a further another 64 projects are being staffed and planned. Most of these projects are funded from the national sources of the ISAF countries, while the EU provides some funds for the efforts to improve the water supply in Kabul. Contributions by member countries of the United Nations to the trust fund established pursuant to

Security Council resolution 1386 would help finance ISAF's joint expenses including assistance projects.

3. SPECIFIC CHALLENGES

a. While not forming a central part of ISAF's mandate, some specific issues continue to have implications for security and stability in Kabul.

b. The creation of a genuinely national army is still of critical importance. While the Afghan authorities continued to prepare a conceptual document setting out certain parameters for defense reform, the fundamental question of determining the future status of the several corps in the provinces under the control of the regional leaders has not been settled. The overall institutional structure and command and control arrangements of a new national army should be determined as a matter of priority, so that the individual battalions trained by some nations and ISAF could be assigned a meaningful role.

c. The flow of actual international aid remains limited, in contrast to appeals by the Afghan authorities and the pledges made at the Tokyo Conference. The lack of adequate financial assistance continues to hamper the efforts of the Afghan government to form effective central governmental institutions and to extend them to the entire country. It is essential to ensure that the government has enough authority to fight regionalism and factional politics. The senior Afghan leadership should be encouraged to engage regional leaders and to endeavor to secure a national consensus on the fundamental issues facing the country. Most police and army officers and public employees are not receiving their salaries on time and there is considerable concern that this might strengthen criminal tendencies. The lack of resources also hampers efforts to restrict the narcotics trade.

d. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, more than 1.6 million people are estimated to have returned to the country since March, mostly from Pakistan. Well over half a million refugees have settled in Kabul so far, taking advantage of the relative stability of the city. However, the presence of such

a large number of refugees continues to have a negative impact upon the security circumstances in Kabul and to cause concern for the plight of the refugees next winter.

4. CONCLUSION

ISAF continues to provide substantial assistance to the Afghan authorities in maintaining security in Kabul and its surrounding areas. While the security circumstances remain potentially vulnerable, the situation in and around Kabul was calm in the reporting period. ISAF has endeavored to remedy certain shortfalls in the security system, in cooperation with the Afghan authorities, and to encourage greater security coordination and vigilance. However, substantial international assistance will be essential in order to help Afghanistan defeat the residual terrorist threat, reject extremist ideologies and remove the underlying causes of conflict. It has so far not been possible to mobilize such assistance. It is also important to ensure that all international aid is channeled through the central government, in order to help the government extend its authority to the provinces.